

**USAID/LAC/RSD**  
**Education and Human Resources Team**

**Close-Out Report for:**  
**Strategic Objective 598-002**  
**1996 – 2001**

**I. Basic Identifying Information**

Strategic Objective:	Improved Human Resource Policies Adopted in Selected Latin American and Caribbean countries
SO Number:	598-002 (SO 2)
Initial Obligation:	FY 1996
SO Approval Date:	June, 1995
Geographic Areas:	LAC region
Estimated Total Cost:	\$11,016,684
Estimated Counterpart Contributions:	\$491,461 (PREAL match)
Principal Implementing Partners and Activities:	Inter-American Dialogue (IAD) for Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL); Academy for Educational Development (AED) and U.S. Department of Education for U.S.-Brazil Partnership; and UNESCO for its Regional Indicators Project,

**II. Overview of Strategic Objective**

The LAC Regional SO2 included three key results, which were: (a) Public and private sector support for education reform built; (b) capacity of public and private organizations to work for education reform strengthened; and (c) best education policies and practices in Latin America and elsewhere identified, analyzed and strengthened. SO2 worked to accomplish this by (a) documenting shortcomings in existing educational systems, (b) articulating the case for education reform; and (c) developing a constituency and strengthening local capacity and commitment to participate in education reform.

The SO included the following activities:

PREAL: The key focus of SO2 was the Partnership for Educational Revitalization In the Americas (PREAL), a hemispheric initiative aimed at building a broad and active constituency for education reform across Latin America. Since 1996 PREAL has become the leading non-governmental voice on education in Latin America and a strong advocate for involving leaders from government, business and civil society in promoting education reform. PREAL's catalytic role directly influenced the education agenda and recommendations of the 1998 Summit of the Americas. LAC provided PREAL with \$7,104,753.

UNESCO Regional Indicators Project: The LAC Bureau also provided \$400,000 of support to UNESCO's Regional Education Indicators project. This was a Santiago Summit of the Americas initiative that helped enhance accountability by forging regional agreement on an international standard classification of education indicators. The program set the following objectives: (1) construct a basic set of comparable education indicators for the Americas, taking into account the existing initiatives; (2) strengthen national systems of education statistics and develop a technical cooperation program; and (3) publish the indicators and foster their use in the design of education policies. The program aimed to address the fact that countries have different systems for collecting, defining and using statistics; and there is inadequate information for many variables, including age of students, training of teachers and literacy rates. Governments participating in the Summit of the Americas agreed that this activity was a critical first step to enhancing accountability and quality of education systems.

US/Brazil partnership: Prior to the visit of President Clinton in October, 1997, President Cardoso of Brazil sent a letter to the White House suggesting that the two nations implement a "Partnership in Education," since both Governments were deeply committed to education reform. In response, the U.S. Secretary of Education, Richard W. Riley, representing the Government of the United States, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on October 14, 1997 during President Clinton's visit to Brazil. The MOU was intended to enhance and expand cooperative educational efforts between the two nations.

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) had primary responsibility for implementing the U.S. portion of the MOU, in consultation with the Department of State, the United States Information Agency, the Agency for International Development, the National Science Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The primary agency responsible for implementation of the MOU for the Federal Republic of Brazil was the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The two governments agreed to hold a series of policy dialogues (hosted alternately in each country) in five areas: 1) educational standards, assessments and indicators; 2) technology in education; 3) strengthening professional

development of teachers and school managers; 4) enhancing business, community and family involvement in education; and 5) diversifying educational exchanges between the United States and Brazil. Given that education in Brazil has traditionally been a top-down activity with resources and decision-making centralized in state capitals and the federal ministries, the choice of policy topics and President Cardoso's decision to sponsor this partnership was considered significant..

USAID, after consultation with its U.S. partners and the Government of Brazil, agreed to provide funds to support the following: (a) an Inter-Agency agreement for \$75,000 with the U.S. Department of Education to support the policy dialogue series; (b) a grant of \$177,927 with the American Institutes for Research to cover a training program for Brazilian school principals, and (c) a buy in for \$593,659 to the Academy for Education Development (AED) LearnLink project to support a bi-lingual English/Portuguese website that provides information on educational technologies and information.

Creative Associates, Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) IQC Contract: USAID negotiated a Task Order with Creative Associates to provide technical assistance to the LAC Bureau and its missions through the Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Project. The Task Order was valued at \$1,404,497. BEPS provided expertise on education policy reforms, analyzed existing strategies and activities, supported LAC in development of its follow-on education strategy, 598-023 (SO23), carried out an evaluation of the PREAL project, provided technical assistance to selected Latin America and Caribbean countries, and supported design of the Presidential Initiative, the Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training.

In addition to the above, the strategy supported several other small buys-ins and purchase orders to provide technical assistance for the development and evaluation of programs, including the design of education activities in Central America and the Caribbean following Hurricanes Mitch and Georges in 1998. Only the key programs are described in detail in this report.

### **III. Summary of Accomplishments**

Performance under this SO met and in some cases exceeded expectations.

#### PREAL:

PREAL exceeded expectations for building public and private support for education reform through dozens of outreach activities, as well as through the amount and quality of research and publications it produced and disseminated. PREAL has been credited with producing the most comprehensive publications to date on education problems and recommendations for change. The Future at Stake and Tomorrow is Too Late are two examples of reports that have informed and shaped the policy debate on education throughout the region. Several

effective dialogue, communication, and analytical tools for promoting education policy reform among business leaders, government officials and academic leaders have been developed and are being effectively applied to create a cadre of advocates at the highest levels throughout the region. The Central American Report Card, a mechanism to document the successes and failures of education and identify areas for improvement, was conceptualized and developed.

PREAL also published its first “Report Card on Education in Latin America,” a major step forward in efforts to mobilize reform around specific challenges facing the region’s education systems and increase the accountability of education systems. The “report card” for the first time equipped the public, as well as those who use schools (parents, employers and students) with information about how their schools compare with others in the region. Additionally, PREAL identified four key objectives that governments must support to move education reform forward. They are: 1) set standards for the education system and measure progress toward meeting them; 2) give schools and local communities more control over and responsibility for education; 3) strengthen the teaching profession by raising salaries, reforming training, and making teachers more accountable to the communities they serve; and 4) invest more money per student in pre-school, primary and secondary education. These four objectives, as well as the concept of report cards in education, became the basis of a follow-on cooperative agreement to PREAL under SO23, as well as goals of both the LAC and Central America and Mexico (CAM) regional programs.

Other major accomplishments of PREAL included:

- Establishment of a 24-institution network to work on education reform in 16 countries (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, and the Dominican Republic).
- Establishment of a multinational Task Force on Education, Equity and Economic Competitiveness in Latin America and the Caribbean that released and distributed a comprehensive report in three languages, entitled *The Future at Stake*, which details Latin America’s education problems and makes practical recommendations for change.
- Establishment of a Central American Task Force for Educational Reform composed of influential government, political, business, and academic leaders from seven countries—Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, and the Dominican Republic. The Task Force produced a report entitled “*Manana es muy tarde*” that analyzes the principal problems facing schools in Central America and offers recommendations for change.
- Support of region-wide working groups on standards and evaluation, teachers unions, and the politics of reform, each of which has produced and distributed numerous publications.

- Support of region-wide dialogue venues to debate education decentralization, standards and evaluation, finance, business-education partnerships, trends in educational innovations, school autonomy, business and education, and the teaching profession.

#### US-Brazil Partnership:

The US/Brazil Partnership served as an outstanding model of inter-governmental cooperation between USAID, The U.S. Department of Education (USED), The U.S. Department of State (USDOS), the United States Information Agency (USIA), the National Science Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Under the Partnership, USAID supported a program called LTNet, which had two parts. One part focused on supporting study tours and conferences for Brazilian educators visiting the United States. The second part consisted of a bilingual web site that provided U.S. and Brazilian educators, researchers, policy makers, and business people access to information, educational technologies and networking support and services.

Key to this initiative was a bilingual web site, implemented through LearnLink that provided U.S. and Brazilian educators, researchers, policy makers, and business people access to information about educational technologies and networking support and services. Study tours and policy dialogue forums for Brazilian educators visiting the United States complimented this virtual forum and focused on three areas: 1) educational standards, assessment and indicators; 2) technology in education; 3) professional development for teachers and school managers; and community participation and public-private partnerships. The effectiveness of the partnership was evidenced at the EPIC meeting on education technology held in California wherein Brazilian Ministry of Education officials articulated their education technology programs and views to a range of interested U.S. agencies and other U.S. education groups, which included Secretary Riley from the U.S. Department of Education. Successful elements of the partnership will be applied in the next year to two additional areas: 1) expanding higher education exchanges; and 2) enhancing business, community, and family involvement in education.

The LTNet web site offered:

- a. A variety of online tools for communicating and collaborating with other LTNet users.
- b. A “virtual library” of quality resources on educational technologies, many with abstracts.
- c. Five interactive online learning environments focusing on critical educational issues facing Brazil and the United States.

- d. A "What's New" section providing information about new and interesting reports, web sites, activities and events related to learning technologies.
- e. Volunteer and internship opportunities for those interested in contributing to the development of the LTNet web site.
- f. Periodic updates to ListServ members about LTNet and learning technologies and about projects in Brazil and the United States.
- g. Background information about LTNet and the participants in the U.S./Brazil Education Partnership.

To ensure sustainability of LTNet services when the project ended, LTNet established a partnership with GlobalEnglish.com -- a company that delivers English language instructions via the web. Through this partnership, LTNet could offer Brazilian public schools free access to GlobalEnglish's on-line English language resources. The Brazilian Ministry of Education also allocated approximately \$150,000 to support LTNet activities in Brazil. These funds covered the costs of hiring staff to help develop and maintain the LTNet web site and to carry out workshops and training activities in Brazil.

Under the Partnership seven policy dialogues were also held, including one in Rio de Janeiro on Educational Standards in February, 1998 and one in Palo Alto, California on Technology in Education in December, 1998 -- with excellent success. In Rio, the USED provided three experts in the area of standards, assessment and indicators, including one from the State of New York, one from the university community (UCLA), and one from a non-governmental organization (NGO) working in Philadelphia. In Palo Alto, the meetings were held at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) with seven experts in various aspects of educational technology. The policy dialogues were well received by the Brazilians and were seen as having advanced their knowledge in the respective areas.

USAID also supported a tour of Brazilian school principals to the U.S. on a two-week program that focused on exposing the Brazilians to exemplary examples of public private partnerships between schools, communities and businesses around Washington, D.C., New York and New Jersey. To encourage a "multiplier effect" each participant was expected to write a summary of their experiences as well as a plan for relating the knowledge gained on the tour to others in their home state.

UNESCO Indicators Project: The Summit of the Americas Regional Education Indicators Project (PRIE) was carried out from August 2000 to August 2003, with support from UNESCO, USAID, the U.S. Department of Education, World Bank, and the Public Education Secretariat of Mexico. PRIE succeeded in developing, with support from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) a set of initial indicators for use across the Americas; as well as presenting and distributing their data to Ministries of Education. PRIE also began a system of strengthening

statistic systems of countries within the region and encouraging the use of quality information in education decision-making.

### **Summary of Impact at SO and IR level in relation to what was planned**

The three IRs for SO were:

- (a) Public and private sector support for education reform built;
- (b) capacity of public and private organizations to work for education reform strengthened; and
- (c) best education policies and practices in Latin America and elsewhere identified, analyzed and strengthened.

The accomplishments highlighted in this document by all SO2-funded projects, including PREAL UNESCO and the US/Brazil Partnership, clearly demonstrate that LAC was effective in strengthening government capacity and commitment to support education reform, and in sharing some of the best reform models with ministries of education throughout the region.

It is important to note that policy reforms can take many years to accomplish, often don't occur until there's a change in political administrations, are difficult to measure, and are often hard to attribute to a specific intervention. Consequently, throughout the length of the PREAL program, both LAC and PREAL continuously re-examined and refined the measures by which PREAL's success was measured. Thus, quantifying the impact of PREAL was and continues to be a challenge, though LAC believes the indicators used in PREAL's new agreement under SO23 are greatly enhanced from those that were used under SO2. Moreover, the impact of PREAL is clearly demonstrated in a qualitative review of everything carried under its cooperative agreement.

### **Lessons Learned:**

SO2 had some major accomplishments and was a solid introduction into education reform in LAC by USAID. Some reforms have clearly occurred and LAC has been successful in keeping education reform high on the policy agenda at the Summit of the Americas (from which the PREAL program was developed), though PREAL, and in our bilateral missions. The strength of this message is reflected in the fact that the recently developed Central America and Mexico (CAM) strategy has governance and accountability as the focus of its education program.

Despite movement forward, education reform in the region remains a major challenge. This is due in large measure to the fact that the level of public demand for reform has been inadequate to stimulate government action. In the current environment, citizens lack access to reliable information; there is a lack of processes to systematically incorporate citizen views on reform and enable citizens to take responsibility as active participants in the progress of their communities and their children's schools; government commitment to be

responsive, accountable and transparent has been inadequate and civil society has not held government accountable.

For informed discussion to take place about the quality of education, people need information about the system, particularly about the performance of the system's outputs. Holding government leaders or teachers accountable is unrealistic when there are no educational standards or systems to evaluate performance based upon those standards—which is the case in most of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Progress is being made in the establishment of tests to measure student learning, yet these testing systems are new and many have serious shortcomings: capacity for testing and measurement is weak; test objectives are not clear; test results are not used to improve schools; and there is widespread resistance to measuring and comparing scores. Consequently, to date, no country in the hemisphere has established, disseminated, and implemented comprehensive and comparable national education standards or indicators.

Moreover, because Ministries of Education tend to have limited technical capacity in this area, are already overburdened and limited in their resources, their capacity to focus on standards and assessment is constrained. Even more critical, however, is that because a culture of accountability is largely absent in LAC countries and among those responsible for providing education, the providers (e.g. government officials and teachers) tend to distrust or even resist establishing standards or conducting assessments, and when such measures are imposed, governments tend to resist making their methodologies and results public. This results in reduced opportunities to identify where and why children are not learning and is a significant obstacle to moving forward with education reform.

These are all challenges that the LAC Bureau and LAC Missions will continue to face for many years in the effort to reform education in the region.

### **Modifications to SO**

SO2 was originally approved with a life-of-objective funding level of \$7,146,000. Subsequent amendments increased the funding level to \$9,436,000.

Discrepancies between the approved funding level and the amount obligated are likely due to early efforts to associate all activities with Strategic Objectives when the Agency converted from accounting by "projects" to "SO." to cover the period October 1996 to September 2001. In August, 2001, a one-year, no-cost extension of the SO was approved to cover September 30, 2001 to September 30, 2002. This was provided to permit the continuation of U.S. Government support for three Summit initiatives: 1) The UNESCO PIO grant that supports the Comparable National Indicators initiative which was awarded late in the strategy period in response to a window of opportunity that allowed U.S. participation in this high-profile hemispheric Summit initiative; 2) The Task Order under G/HCD's



Basic Education Policy Support (BEPS) contract was needed to facilitate the ongoing support of the Presidential Teacher Training Centers Initiative; and 3) The Inter-American Dialogue requested an extension to the PREAL Cooperative Agreement, to permit the completion of activities whose start-up was delayed by unavoidable complications in the sub-granting process.

#### **Evaluations Carried out Under SO:**

LAC/RSD carried out an evaluation of the PREAL project in FY 2000 and was pleased to ascertain that, overall, in the four countries examined, PREAL achieved remarkable success in implementing, and with limited funds, the three intermediate results agreed to in its cooperative agreement. PREAL was credited with creating national-level debates on education reform; engaging many sectors of government and civil society in such debates; conducting broad research and publishing relevant materials of high professional quality; and ensuring major stakeholders receive key publications on a regular basis. When the evaluation team surveyed those who had participated in PREAL events, it found that 63% of participants provided evidence of how PREAL events had impacted educational practices or policies in their countries. Despite these important successes, the evaluators stated that PREAL now needs to turn its focus toward building sustainable institutions, strengthening its M&E system to capture impact, and fine tune its very ambitious agenda to ensure that management capacity and resources are sufficient to cover its many planned activities. The team concluded that "PREAL now needs to channel its comparative advantages -- excellent networks of senior people, good research and distribution, and the ability to create a vision -- to be more effective in translating educational practice - to see, in effect, that its own major recommendations become reality."

#### **Close-Out of Activities**

All activities under SO2 have ended and most funds have been expended. In a few cases, however, funds have not been fully expended. The contractors and grantees that have not submitted final documents and reports will soon be notified so that the Agency can proceed to de-obligate unused funds. A list of the agreements and their current status is found on Attachment 1.

**Names and Contact point of individuals** (involved in various phases of the SO and who would be good contacts for additional information)

PREAL: David Evans and Susan Morawetz, [devans@usaid.gov](mailto:devans@usaid.gov); [smorawetz@usaid.gov](mailto:smorawetz@usaid.gov)

US/Brazil Partnership: David Evans, [devans@usaid.gov](mailto:devans@usaid.gov); and Cynthia Chassy ([Cchassy@usaid.gov](mailto:Cchassy@usaid.gov))

UNESCO: Rebecca Adams, [rebeccaadams@usaid.gov](mailto:rebeccaadams@usaid.gov)

Creative Associates, [devans@usaid.gov](mailto:devans@usaid.gov), [rebeccaadams@usaid.gov](mailto:rebeccaadams@usaid.gov)

## ATTACHMENT 1. STATUS OF KEY CONTRACTS/AGREEMENTS UNDER STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 598-002

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>	<b>Obligated</b>	<b>Liquidated</b>	<b>Recorded Balance</b>	<b>Amount Deobligated</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>Inter-American Dialogue (PREAL)</b>	LAG-A-00096-00002	9/30/96	3/31/02	\$7,104,753	\$7,104,753	\$0	\$0	Closed
<b>Creative Associates (tech support)</b>	HNE-I-00-00-00038	2/04/00	2/03/05	\$1,404,497	\$1,404,411	\$86	\$0	Operating under new task order
<b>Academy for Educational Development (AED) - US/Brazil</b>	HNE-Q-00-94-00076	9/29/94	9/30/99	\$593,659	\$575,476	\$18,193	\$0	
<b>U.S. Department of Education (IAA) US/Brazil</b>	LAC-P-00-99-00007	8/12/99	9/30/01	\$75,000	\$45,000	\$30,000	\$0	
<b>American Institutes for Research (AIR) US/Brazil</b>	HNE-I-00-97-00029	4/24/97	9/30/03	\$177,927	\$171,717	\$6,210	\$0	
<b>UNESCO Indicators Project</b>	LAC-G-00-00-000010	9/21/00	9/30/03	\$400,000	\$190,324	\$209,676	\$0	
<b>Academy for Educational Development Tech. Support</b>	HNE-I-00-96-00018	9/30/96	9/30/03	\$957,117	\$957,117	\$1,108,412	-\$151,295	
<b>David Evans</b>	512-O-00-97-00066	10/31/97	5/30/98	\$79,500	\$64,209	\$15,291	\$0	
<b>International Resources Group</b>	AOT-O-00-97-00023	12/9/96	12/15/03	\$21,000	\$5,417	\$15,583	\$0	
<b>Inter-American Dialogue</b>	LAG-G-00-94-00005	9/30/96	3/31/02	\$157,000	\$157,000	\$0	\$0	Closed

		<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End Date</b>			<b>Recorded Balance</b>	<b>Amount Deobligated</b>	
<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Agreement</b>			<b>Obligated</b>	<b>Liquidated</b>			<b>Status</b>
<b>David Evans</b>	LAG-O-00-98-00039	6/4/98	9/30/98	\$21,490	\$21,490	\$0	\$0	closed
<b>Benjamin Alvarez</b>	LAG-O-0099-00005	1/15/99	3/18/99	\$12,925	\$12,924	\$1	\$0	
<b>Dr. Joan Dassin</b>	LAC-O-00-99-00006	1/15/99	3/18/99	\$11,816	\$11,816	\$0	\$0	closed